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ABSTRACT

A case study describes how a rural local education agency (Allegany County, Maryland) developed a comprehensive staff development system. It presents some contextual and theoretical background information, summarizes the problem as perceived by key actors, and then describes a series of activities resulting in the development of the comprehensive system. The early stages of the activity involved discussion among administrative staff, recruitment of outsiders, and clarification of goals and operating constraints. In the workshops that followed, an action research model was used, in which participants determined how each task (data collection, data analysis, selection, and implementation) should be done and who should take charge. Thereafter, a needs assessment survey was developed, in which 26 concerns and 29 items relating to knowledge and skills were rated by the various role groups--administrators, teachers, and aides. In general, concerns given priority suggested a need to clarify goals, coordinate resource allocation, and improve cooperation and communication. Analysis of the results also indicated the need for differentiated inservice programs designed specifically to address a particular role as well as areas of common concern to two or more role groups. The nature of the process--particularly the emphasis on equity and interdependence--and the total involvement of the staff are the most important factors in producing effective staff development activities. (TE)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

INITIATING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association,
New Orleans, April 1984.

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Introduction

This paper is a case study describing how a rural local education agency (LEA) developed a comprehensive system for staff development (CSDS). It presents some background information, summarizes the problem as perceived by key actors, then describes a series of activities resulting in the development of the CSDS. Barriers and facilitators encountered are discussed, and results of a district-wide needs assessment are presented.

Background Information

Allegany County is a rural LEA in western Maryland, with 33 public schools, and 1332 employees. Local educators welcome ideas and assistance from "outsiders" such as staff of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Frostburg State College, the Appalachia Project's Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), the University of Maryland, and the Regional Laboratory -- Research for Better Schools (RBS). All those agencies were represented in the development of CSDS, but leadership was maintained by Allegany County educators.

During 1982 several events, concerns, and ideas became strongly evident to Allegany educators. While at first they seemed to be separate, their relationships became apparent when they were explored systemically. All were "pressures" for change, for instance:

- A new superintendent had been appointed (July 1, 1982) and believed in the importance of positive attitudes, but staff morale was poor, partly due to reductions in force (RIFs) caused by funding cuts.
- National and state attention was focused on school and classroom effectiveness and ways to implement relevant research, and an LEA program was underway to diagnose school climate with subsequent problem resolution by school teams, but the program potential was not being reached.

- An LEA program to promote equity was underway in which participants (mostly administrators) had increased self awareness and learned to respect and value the differences in others, and wanted to find ways in which program concepts and learnings could be shared with other LEA staff.

- Isolation of individuals, friction between role groups, and general low-level dissatisfaction within some role groups caught staff in a spiral of poor communication, time-wasting conflict management, varying levels of commitment to the school system and its activities, and varying levels of effectiveness.

- Staff development was one of the 10 LEA priorities, but it was recognized that the traditional teacher inservice did not achieve the results desired by participants nor by administration.

- All LEA employees contributed to the education of the students, but that mission had somehow become submerged, the inter-dependence of role groups was forgotten, and it was time that everyone started working together.

With these pressures recognized by central office staff and shared with invited "outsiders," relevant information was explored to determine what improvements could be made (with no expectation of additional funds beyond a part of the Chapter II allocation). Some of the knowledge base which influenced subsequent action is outlined below.

An LEA is a decentralized system with each school having high autonomy, which means that a large number of communication mechanisms must be used to strengthen informal structures (Louis & Sieber, 1977). Since schools and role groups need to collaborate in order to achieve the system's mission, "communication should emphasize information sharing rather than direction giving, and strive for a network structure of control" (Pasmore et al., 1978). In order to reduce the burden on administrators and expand the problem-solving resources available to the system, lateral communication (between role groups and between schools) should be encouraged (Pasmore et al., 1978; Louis & Sieber, 1979). For such breaks with bureaucratic tradition (pyramid

hierarchy), and in order to overcome the high autonomy needs of professional educators (Derr, 1976), a common goal must be found in which those involved have an equal stake in the consequences (Rath & Hagans, 1978). The goal should have realistic parameters (Gross & Mojkowski, 1977), deal with real issues (Congreve, 1969), and identify common interests (Rubin, 1980). If action is to occur, those affected by it should participant in its design; such participatory planning is crucial to the success of a collaborative improvement project (Firestone, 1977). This means that all role groups should have the opportunity not only to clarify tasks, but also to be involved in planning, which must then be flexible and interactive (Ackoff, 1977), even though coordination in the early stages is very difficult since assignments cannot be clearly prescribed (Pasmore et al., 1978). Role group participants should be perceived by each other as partners in a collaborative effort, which differs from a cooperative project in that in the former members are equal, while in the latter "leaders" see themselves as activating and channeling the energy of others who are receptive volunteers (Roberts, 1978, with reference to Sieber, 1972).

When participants of a system recognize a need for improvement but have no particular ready-made solution in mind, one of three models of planned change may be applied (or a combination): the problem-solving model based on the work of Lippit, Watson and Westly (1958), Havelock's linkage model, or a process of organization development (OD). In all three models a problem is identified, clarified through some form of diagnosis, and resolved by employing strategies (or innovations) identified by systematic search and retrieval of ideas from a credible knowledge base. In all cases "outsiders" assist members of the "internal" organization. The models differ in that

there is greater reliance on "outsiders" and a greater emphasis on affective process activities in OD than in the other models, and the linkage model stresses the value of research-based knowledge provided by "outsiders" (Roberts, 1978, pp. 20-31).

When problems within a system relate to the individual members rather than to a specific program or organizational unit, they may be addressed by staff development -- not simply training or inservice but a more general personal and professional development of the people in the system. The structure and activities should be such that: (1) the individuals must want to learn, (2) the learning must be in context and "owned" by the learner, (3) group learning should occur, (4) each individual should learn about himself/herself, others in his/her work situation, and better ways to get the work done, and (5) anyone in a leadership role should encourage participants to contribute the three kinds of learning (self, others, work) to any task at hand, recognizing that individuals and the organization will then benefit (Handy, 1976, pp. 253-279). For any given area of learning, if ideas are to be applied, a series of activities is needed: (1) rationale and theory building, (2) demonstration and modeling, (3) practice and feedback, and (4) individualized on-site coaching or trouble-shooting (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

With ideas such as the above in mind, the problem gradually became more clearly defined, and a small group of central office staff, including those involved in the projects in school climate and equity, and under the leadership of the assistant superintendent, decided to design and implement a comprehensive staff development system (CSDS).

Initiating CSDS

The early stages of activity involved discussions among administrative staff, recruitment of "outsiders," and clarification of goals and operating

constraints. A committee (of school and central office administrators and some "outsiders") was formed, and in September 1982 a mission statement, general objectives, and tentative action guidelines were drafted. Sufficient interest was generated for a decision to be made that effort should be invested to operationalize CSDS for all employees of the LEA.

During the next 12 months several key events occurred, each of which is described here. Between each event several administrative planning meetings were held (some attended by "outsiders"), relevant materials were reviewed and/or developed, and organizational and political tasks carried out. All those involved had other primary responsibilities, and most "outsiders" volunteered most of their time, contributing expertise because they were interested in and impressed by the scope and vision of the project as perceived by the assistant superintendent.

Preliminary Planning

In October the committee met to develop objectives and a time frame for an action plan. It was agreed that an action research model would be used to design the CSDS with involvement of representatives of other role groups.* Such involvement would increase more widespread understanding of the potential of the CSDS, and, by inviting input at this stage, help build commitment. It was recognized that such participatory planning would take longer and would require very careful capacity building to ensure equity among role groups and hierarchical levels. However, most members of the administrative committee believed that it could be done and would be more effective in the long run.

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* Role groups included: administrative supervisors, aides and technicians, cafeteria staff, custodial and maintenance staff, instructional supervisors, principals and vice principals, secretaries and clerical staff, and teachers (including those in guidance and library/media services). Transportation workers chose not to participant. Board members were invited, and attended some events.

Participatory Planning

A general workshop for 65 participants (County Committee) was conducted in December. Participants worked in small groups (mixed roles and levels) facilitated by members of the administrative committee. Following a general review of the purpose of the meeting (to develop a common understanding of the planning process and of the potential of a CSDS), and summary of activities to date, a series of four activities occurred. For each one an "outsider" reviewed the rationale and theory and explained a task. Then small groups completed the task. Results and reactions were compared among groups between each task and at the end of the day.

The series of activities involved participants in simulating implementation of an action research model (see Figure 1). For each activity area (e.g., data collection) participants discussed specified tasks and determined whether or not they should be carried out, how they should be done, and who should be involved (e.g., taking charge, being informed, giving approval, carrying out the work). Table 1 summarizes tasks suggested for each of the four activity areas.

As participants worked in their small groups members of the administrative committee tried to help overcome barriers such as: uncertainty about the task and perceptions (in a few cases) of personal inadequacy to carry it out, confusion or distrust about the feasibility or probability of implementing a CSDS uneasiness in working on a strange task with strangers (groups were formed so that administrators did not work with staff that they supervised, and so that different role groups worked together). To a great extent these barriers were overcome by the sincerity of the administrative committee members who encouraged equity in a variety of ways. Workshop leaders clarified tasks and discussed Board support for the project.

Table 1

An Action Research Model Used in Planning a Staff Development System*

Activity Area	Task	Components
Data Collection	Identify...	
	- relevant goals, priorities, legislation etc.	local, state, federal
	- needs	individual, program, organization
	- barriers and facilitators	resources, human, political,
	- knowledge of process inservice	adult learning, delivery systems,
Data Analysis	Analyze and prioritize...	
	- goals	
	- needs	role group, program, organization
	- barriers and facilitators	resources, human, political
	- process alternatives	criteria or scenario of viable methods and delivery systems
Selection	Select and determine...	
	- goals of CSDS	
	- needs to be addressed tional location	by role group, program, organiza-
	- resource allocation	by need
	- how barriers will be overcome	
	- processes	timelines, delivery responsibilities, cost effective methods to meet needs and goals
Implementation	Link planning and implementation	role group representation
	Coordinate activities	establish responsibilities and task teams
	Communicate	across role groups and levels of hierarchy
	Organize and deliver training	by role groups and organizational location
	Monitor/evaluate impact of planning and implementation	using data to improve along the way

* For each task, participants determined how it should be done, who should take charge, give approval, be informed, and carry out the work.

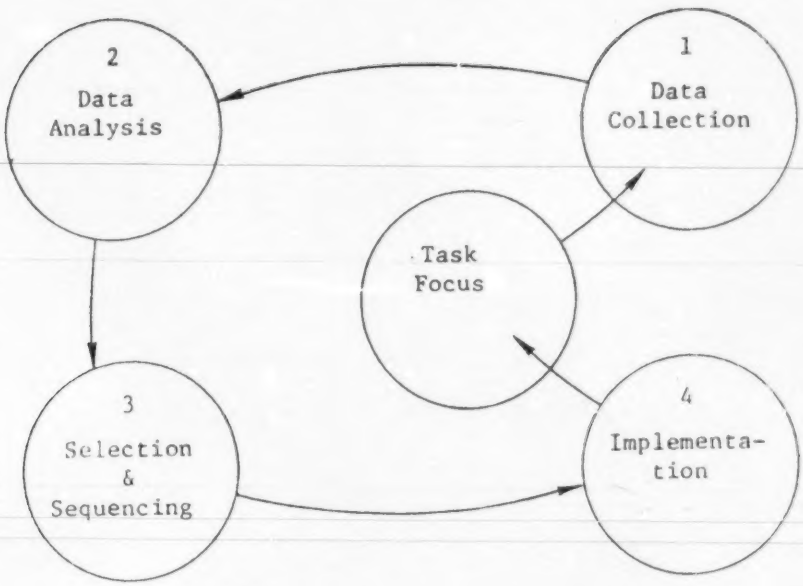

Figure 1. Action Research Model

By the end of the day participants understood the planning process, had greater confidence in the value of their contributions and in the likelihood that a CSDS would be implemented, and had established good relationships among each other. Two main recommendations were made: (1) activities to further define the system should begin as soon as possible, beginning with the design or selection of a needs assessment measure or process; and (2) opportunity should be given to "official" representatives (e.g., association leaders) to review activities, to determine specific role group responsibilities in the design and implementation of a CSDS, and to design an organizational structure. It was agreed that a needs assessment sub-committee should draft some ideas, and in the spring a meeting of role group representatives would be held to follow through on the two recommendations.

Representatives' Decision-Making

Such a meeting was held at the end of March 1983. Attended by 27 participants (some of whom had been involved in previous activities) the meeting included: a review of activities to date and of the planning model; discussion of roles and responsibilities of role group representatives; review of a needs assessment process; and discussion of structures and mechanisms for CSDS. During the day concerns were raised about: the relative priority of CSDS; commitment; the relative sincerity of the invitation for all "levels" and roles to influence CSDS planning and implementation; program evaluation; and the feasibility of using an adapted version of the needs assessment process reviewed.* These concerns were openly discussed.

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* The process was developed by Jim Greenberg (University of Maryland) and Maurice Erly et al. of Prince George's County and used there for instructional staff before being modified and used for all role groups in Allegany, May 18, 1983.

Decisions were made and actions taken to restructure the administrative committee, initiate the needs assessment process, and publicize key events and decisions. A sense of group cohesion was illustrated by the frequency and "comfort level" of statements volunteered by participants with traditionally low authority. By the end of the day participants had greater understanding and belief in the concepts of CSDS in which the focus is the individual who influences and is influenced by activities related to goals and objectives of comprehensive staff development, all within a philosophy of equity.

Development of the Needs Assessment Survey

In May the County Committee* applied the first stage of the needs assessment process: development of concerns and delivery methods to form the basis of a survey questionnaire. Careful preparation and involvement of "outside" volunteers as group facilitators helped make the day's activity go smoothly.

Procedures involved two types of small groups in idea generation and consensus building activities. First, "mixed" small groups (across hierarchy and across role) listed and ranked task concerns, and then listed and ranked ways in which those concerns might best be addressed by staff development (delivery options). "Common" (role-alike) small groups listed and ranked critical job skills or functions, indicating those in greatest need of improvement, and then listed training needs of other role groups. Group membership lists were made up ahead of time and groups were led by "outsiders," who guided each activity by saying something like this:

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* Membership in the County Committee was formalized to ensure that all role groups were represented and at least one person from each school was involved.

1. Task: Think about on the job tasks you do. What frustrates you, gets in the way of getting the work done? List concerns, things that can be improved on. Rank order individually, then share top priorities and develop a group list.

2. Delivery options: Think about past experiences and future ideals -- not simply the traditional workshop, conference or college course, but also curriculum development or supervision activities, or school staff meetings, and their characteristics.

3. Critical functions: Think about tasks, responsibilities, and skills used in your role. Rank order the top ten and assess each in terms of performance (doing well, adequate, needs improvement).

4. Others' needs: For each other role group, state areas which need improvement that might be addressed by staff development.

The 113 concern statements generated by participants fell into 17 categories, with highest consensus of concern for "time and management," "communication," and "incentives." The 44 knowledge/skill statements fill into 29 areas, with many (e.g., "human relations," "safety," "equity") crossing several role groups. Ideas about the process or delivery methods for staff development included 89 statements which fell into 10 categories. Not only the traditional methods (such as role group workshops), but also methods such as school-based meetings, inter-school visits, and cross-role, cross-hierarchy workshops were listed. Participants did not develop traditional lists of inservice topics or training formats. They saw staff development in its broadest sense and addressed more organizational (system) issues than personal concerns. It was apparent that participants had developed a sense of ownership in CSDS, would not be satisfied with "goodbye and God bless you" workshops on single/simple topics, but wanted interactive organization development, and staff development resolving real concerns.

A survey questionnaire was developed based on the ideas generated at the workshop. It presented: (1) nine overall concepts (e.g., "If I take part in a meeting or workshop I want some follow-up -- to know results or to help me

"trouble-shoot if I try new skills or ideas") each with a five point "agreement" rating scale; (2) 26 concerns (e.g., "role clarification: how to make sure we understand our own jobs, that others around us also understand what we do, and how our work fits together") each with a five point "importance" scale, and choice of five delivery methods*; and (3) 29 knowledge/skills areas (e.g., "curriculum development and coordinated use," "equipment care and use") each with a five point "importance" scale, and choice of five delivery methods.*

Simulation and Determination of Structures

In August a series of three overnight workshops was held, each attended by about 60 people, including representatives for all role groups, and with all schools represented by a team including the principal and up to four other staff (instructional and support). Each workshop was identical, involving participants in: (1) some team building/equity activities, (2) a "pilot" use and critique of the needs assessment questionnaire, (3) simulation in small groups of planning to address needs identified by survey results, and (4) final determination of the CSDS organizational structure and of CSDS implementation strategies. About half of the participants had been involved in at least one other key activity; the others had initial reservations and concerns about the relative "reality" of the project and the extent to which their contributions were valued. As before, these concerns were overcome through discussion, demonstration of equity, and the sincerity of steering committee members. Other outcomes of the series of meetings included:

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* Delivery methods listed were: (1) school building inservice or problem-solving sessions, (2) system-wide with people of different jobs and levels, (3) system-wide with people with the same kind of job, (4) college courses, and (5) inter-school visits, job shadowing.

- Final agreement on the CSDS organizational structure (see Figure 2) and roles and responsibilities of the various teams and committees (including school based teams incorporating those formed for the "school climate" project)

- Agreement that the survey questionnaire (with slight modifications) should be distributed at "in-person" school or role group meetings, and should be completed by all LEA employees

- Agreement that survey results should be analyzed by role group and by school, with meetings facilitated by committee members to review findings and determine priorities and activities

- Strong commitment, group cohesion, and sense of ownership by participants for CSDS -- a shared belief in their individual value and group potential to work together

- Clear common understanding of CSDS -- its purpose, philosophy, development, and potential -- with acceptance of responsibility to share that understanding with colleagues.

Results of the Needs Assessment Survey

The Needs Assessment Survey was given to all employees in the Fall of 1983. Of the thirteen hundred and thirty-two (1332) employees in the system, twelve hundred and forty (1240) returned surveys that could be computer analyzed. Items were analyzed by role group and by school, and each role group and each school were given copies of the printout so that they could assess the kinds of inservice indicated by the results of the Needs Assessment.

There was very high agreement across all role groups with most of the nine overall concepts. However, there was a range of responses relating to whether or not staff development activities should be held in work time and whether or not participants should be rewarded (e.g., by receiving credit toward promotion). In general, respondents wanted to have a say in planning staff development activities, expressed a preference for practical "hands on" activities with a problem-solving orientation, and wanted some follow-up afterwards.

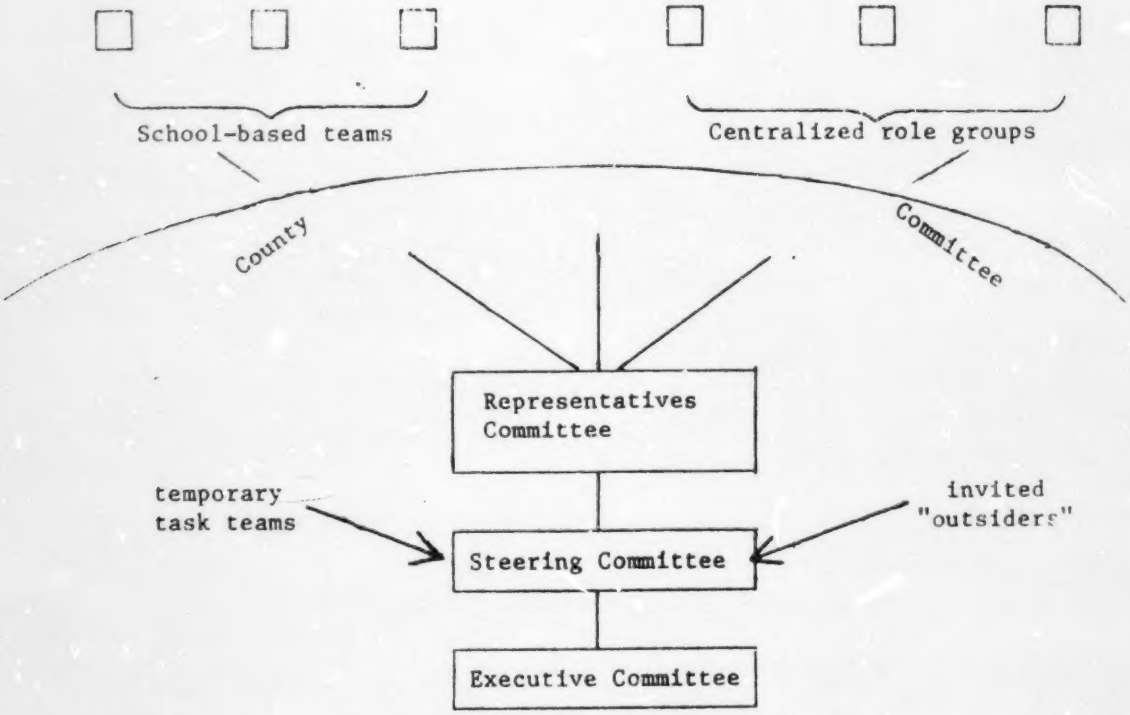

Figure 2. Staff Development Organizational Structure

Every school has a staff development team which includes the principal, at least one teacher and at least one other person with non-instructional responsibilities. At least one of those people is a member of the county committee which includes representatives of all role groups and schools. The representative committee is smaller, with members representing all role groups. It serves as a "pool" from which members are drawn to serve on the steering committee. Executive committee members are drawn from the steering committee. Invited "outsiders" e.g., from RESA and Frostburg are also members of the steering committee. Temporary task teams are formed as needed. Communication is open. Decisions are influenced by all units of the structure.

Fourteen of the 26 concerns were rated of sufficient importance to be among the "top five" for one or more role groups. (See Table 2.) The top priority systemwide (and for teachers and aides) was:

- making sure money is allocated to pay for materials, jobs to be done, or lessons to be taught.

Two other concerns rated as very important also related to materials. (In analyzing this area of concern, local staff realized that budget allocations for instructional materials had been reduced 67% over the previous three years.) The two other concerns among the top five system-wide related to discipline and morale. Points of interest in the analysis of results were:

- Of the teachers' top concerns, four matched those of aides and principals/vice principals and three matched those of secretaries and custodial staff
- Of the principals'/vice-principals' top concerns, four matched those of teachers, maintenance staff, and secretaries, and three matched those of aides and central office administrators
- Of the central administrators' top concerns, four matched those of transportation staff, and three matched those of maintenance staff and principals/vice principals
- The concerns rated very important by six of the nine role groups included:
  - making sure that when a job is to be done, the right kinds of materials, equipment, and people are there on time
  - making sure we are working toward quality education and that everyone understands how we are doing that
  - getting people to work together better and to understand how each can help the other.

In general, concerns given priority suggested a need to clarify goals, coordinate resource allocation, and improve cooperation and communication.

Twenty-one of the 29 items relating to knowledge and skills were rated of sufficient importance to be among the "top five" for one or more of the role groups. (See Table 3.) The top priority systemwide was:

- understanding my role.

Table 2

"Concerns" Ranked as the "Top Five" by LEA Role Groups

Items	All staff	Aides	Central Administrators	Custodial	Food Service	Maintenance	Principals/ Vice Principals	Secretaries	Teachers	Transportation
making sure money is allocated to pay for materials, jobs to be done, or lessons to be taught (funding)	1	1=					3	3=	1	
making sure that when a job is to done the right kinds of materials, equipment, and people are there on time (coordinating)	2	3		1=		1	4=	3=	3	
making sure that everyone, including students, takes care of materials, equipment, and facilities (maintaining)	3	1=		1=	1			3=	4	
developing common rules and standards for students in such a way that everyone keeps to those standards (discipline)	4	5		5			4=		2	
improving everyone's enthusiasm and confidence in the school system (morale)	5		3			2	4=		5	1
making sure we are working toward quality education and that everyone understands how we are doing that (program/ communication)		4	2		5		1	1		5=
getting people to work together better and to understand how each can help the other (cooperation/coordination)			1		4	3=	2	2		3=
sharing the work fairly and making sure we don't make it hard for others to get their work done (role clarification)					2					
making sure we understand our own jobs, that others around us understand what we do, and how our work fits together (role clarification 2)										5=
making sure that people doing the same work get the same pay (incentives)						5=	4=			5=
sharing ideas and information among all role groups, with each person's ideas listened to with respect (communication)			4							
involving the people who must carry out the work in planning and making decisions (participation)			5	4		5=				3=
keeping things in good shape and updating with new equipment (streamlining)				3	3	3=				
making sure the superintendent takes part in planning good educational programs, and is in agreement with other administrators (participation 2)										2

Table 3

"Knowledge and Skills" Ranked as the "Top Five" by LEA Role Groups

Items	All staff	Aides	Central Administrators	Custodial	Food Service	Maintenance	Principals/ Vice Principals	Secretaries	Teachers	Transportation
• understanding our role	1	1		3	2		4	1	5	
• sensitivity to needs of teachers and students	2							5	2	
• human relations skills	3	2-		5-	3	5		2	4	
• safety, first-aid, emergency procedures	4	5		2	5	4		4		1-
• keeping building/equipment clean	5			1		1				
• assessment of student progress		2-							1	
• leadership skills			1	4			5			
• curriculum development and coordinated use							3		3	
• needs analysis and evaluation re: staffing			2				1-			5
• getting instructional materials (with insufficient funds)							1-			
• equipment care and use (e.g., computers)					4	2-				4
• management and/or organization			3			2-				
• nutrition (help students appreciate balanced meals)					1					
• arrangements for use of building after school hours										1-
• accepting more responsibility for student activities										3
• communication skills								3		
• goal setting and effective planning		4								
• public relations			5							
• security arrangements in schools				5-						
• supervision -- to assist teachers in need			3-							

Two other areas in which many participants needed skill development related to interpersonal skills, another to safety, and another to keeping buildings and equipment clean. Six of the nine role groups indicated a need for training in role clarification, human relations skills, and safety and first aid. Other topics of interest to at least three role groups included:

- leadership (administrators, principals/vice principals, and custodial staff)
- equipment care and use, especially of new items such as computers (staff in food services, maintenance, and transportation)
- needs analysis and evaluation re: staffing (administrator, principals/vice principals, transportation staff).

All other topics were of interest to only one or two role groups.

Of the five delivery methods listed in the survey, two were of almost equal popularity with selection relating to the nature of concern or skill:

- school building problem solving meetings
- system-wide, participants of different jobs and levels.

It became apparent that top concerns reflected the role expectation, and that is why it is so very important to have those people being affected involved in specifying their needs. Analysis of results also indicated the need for differentiated inservice programs designed specifically to address a particular role as well as those areas of concern that were common to two or more role groups. This kind of information allowed the LEA to tailor make inservice and to deliver staff development activities in the most efficient, cost effective manner.

Discussion

Over a period of 12 months, Allegany County staff initiated a comprehensive staff development system. They linked research with practice, and involved approximately 200 employees in the planning process.

Barriers encountered for each new group of participants were always the same, although their strength decreased where role group representatives had been involved in planning and then reported back to their colleagues. For the most part barriers were anticipated ahead of time and strategies applied to address them. Factors that facilitated project progress related primarily to knowledge and attitudes of participants (particularly of the small team of local administrators who initiated the project and a core group of "outsiders"). Key barriers, facilitators and strategies are summarized in Table 4.

Since the fall of 1983, the schools' Staff Development Steering Committees, whose membership represents all role groups within the school, have submitted plans for activities addressing the priority needs for the specific school as well as indicating systemwide staff development activities that should be conducted by the central office staff. Using "inservice time," each school has conducted activities designed to meet a priority need.

One large secondary school has planned for a professional day in March to address three issues: communications, discipline, and morale. These activities will include the total staff of the school looking at each person's role and responsibility for each of those concerns, and proposing plans and activities to improve these areas of concern.

The nature of the process and the total involvement of all staff are the most important factors in producing effective staff development activities. The LEA plans to continue to include five professional days in the school calendar for next year to effectively and continually address staff development needs. The LEA also found that employees are willing to give of their own time to participate in staff development activities. In addition, the desired behavioral and attitude changes are monitored by the employees themselves in a cooperative spirit toward accomplishing common goals.

Table 4

Facilitators, Barriers, and Strategies in Planning the CSDS

Facilitators	Barriers	Strategies
- Expertise of Steering Committee	- Lack of expertise of some participants	- Activities led by "outsiders" linking theory & practice, in shared learning
- Some relevant research knowledge available	- No CSDS model available	- Creative combination of research from various fields with practice to meet specific local needs
- Staff development one of 10 LEA School Board priorities	- Lack of shared definition of staff development	- Development of a philosophy, mission statement, and an "ideal scenario" of CSDS three years in the future
	- Some conflict (logistical and political) experienced by staff juggling priorities	- Superintendent's and Board members' participation in some key events, some task adjustment
- "School climate" project with school teams underway at some sites	- Too few schools involved, and too few publicized successes	- Incorporation of some project strategies and concepts (by key staff) into CSDS
- "Equity" project underway, increasing participants' self awareness and improving working relationships	- Too few people involved, with positive impact "trickling down" very slowly	- Incorporation of project concepts into CSDS philosophy, and involvement of CSDS participants in some project activities
- Strong commitment and investment of time and energy by LEA assistant superintendent and Executive Committee	- Initial disbelief of many participants	- Sincerity, provision of opportunity for open discussion, series of activities achieving stated objectives, application of equity principles
- Use of open systems planning	- Initial concerns about logistics and "reality" of widespread participant involvement	- Effective organization/management of activities, real evidence of participant influence on decisions
- Annual CSDS budget of $30,000 plus small sums of project funds	- Insufficient funding for "grand events"	- Funding used primarily for facilities and materials (e.g., needs survey); person time mostly "volunteered"

The "equity theme," which promotes the idea of the importance and the interdependence of all role groups in the delivering of educational services to children, has become a central thrust in this process as a demonstrated reality rather than something to which staff give only lip service. When a school has a staff development steering committee made up of a food service worker, a custodian, a teacher, an aide, and the principal looking at a common problem identified by the personnel in that school and planning the activities to solve that problem, good things happen to children. Employees intend to keep this process going in Allegany County.

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